

Today's News - Thursday, December 16, 2010

- Hawthorne is disappointed with "safe, sleek, inoffensive corporate architecture" in proposals for downtown L.A. stadium "that does little to elevate the conversation about the kind of large-scale civic architecture we want or need in downtown and region."
- Farrelly on Parramatta's desperate need for a "creativity hub," but the Catholic church has other plans: "to me this looks old-fashioned churchiness indeed. It looks, in fact, like an old-style, out-and-out land grab."
- Hume cheers Toronto's new chair of city planning - an architect who's "willing to speak openly about the public realm...as if it were essential to civic well-being" (what a concept!).
- Plans for a 14-block chunk of NYC's Lower East Side bulldozed 42 years ago (and a parking lot ever since) may finally end up with guidelines for development.
- Lots from Down Under: Gehry unveils his "wrinkly, crinkly" landmark for University of Technology Sydney business school, "admitting it will probably cause a stir."
- Bevan finds it "early Christmas present that must have been very difficult to wrap" - the "cacophony of angles" (nicknamed The Treehouse) is "Gehry in spiky mode" (and with other starchitect projects in the works, create Sydney's "most exciting architectural precinct."
- At the other end of the scale is UTS's Great Hall makeover by "by two little-known architects": "Small practices need these opportunities."
- King cheers "striking plan" by Jensen Architects winning Emeryville arts center competition (looks very cool to us, too).
- Russell rides Selldorf's auto elevator at 200 Eleventh Ave. and finds the "diminutive building is at war with itself" with "poorly chosen cost-cutter for a super-lux building" (but "beautifully proportioned" interiors shine).
- Rothstein bemoans Philly's "President's House": "we get neither a sense of the place, nor a sense of the issues" where a memorial to slaver "seems thumped down as an intrusion."
- A preservation battle takes center stage in Moscow.
- Prague preservationists launch a website to highlight the "often problematic relations between Prague's old and modern architecture" and "lucrative buildings" that have suffered façadism.
- It's not architecte, but it's good news to us: a new system can recycle 100% of household plastic, creating millions of dollars worth of recycled chemicals and save millions a year in land fill taxes.

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There's nothing groundbreaking in downtown L.A. stadium design proposals: Safe, sleek, inoffensive corporate architecture is offered that does little to elevate the conversation about the kind of large-scale civic architecture we want or need in downtown and region. By Christopher Hawthorne -- HKS; HNTB; Gensler [slide show]- Los Angeles Times

In matters Parra, God trumps art: ...Parramatta desperately needs a genuine creativity hub...Bishop Anthony Fisher...has lobbied intensely for the site...200 metres of absolute waterfront...to me this looks old-fashioned churchiness indeed. It looks, in fact, like an old-style, out-and-out land grab. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

Peter Milczyn, the man with the plan: ...chair of the city's planning committee wants a better, bolder Toronto - and the transit to go with it...trained architect...willing to speak openly about the public realm...as if it were essential to civic well-being... "Toronto is not a pretty city....There's a lot of timidity here about architecture; everybody hates everything. Then they complain that it costs too much." By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Agreement Seems Near on Long-Stalled Lower East Side Project: In 1967 the city razed 14 blocks to make way for development. The area has been parking lots since...now local leaders are slowly coming to an agreement over what should be built at the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area...hoping that by mid-January they will finish up guidelines for the parcels' development.- New York Times

Sydney to have 'wrinkly, crinkly' landmark: Frank Gehry has unveiled his extraordinary design for the \$150 million University of Technology Sydney (UTS) business school, admitting it will probably cause a stir. [video]- Sydney Morning Herald

Design just the business for city gateway: The University of Technology, Sydney has received an early Christmas present that must have been very difficult to wrap. Frank Gehry's design for its \$150 million business school is a cacophony of angles. This is Gehry in spiky mode...already has a nickname, The Treehouse...Broadway is set to become Sydney's most exciting architectural precinct. By Robert Bevan -- Denton Corker Marshall; Jean Nouvel; Norman Foster- The Australian

Designs on future as university reinvents itself: At one end of the scale is the \$150 million "treehouse" business school designed by Frank Gehry. At the other end of the \$1 billion reinvention of the University of Technology, Sydney, is the \$7 million Great Hall, which will soon have a revolutionary origami-like roof designed by two little-known architects from Chippendale. "Small practices need these opportunities" ... -- De Manincor Russell Architecture Workshop [image]- Sydney Morning Herald

Striking plan selected for Emeryville Center for the Arts: ...includes a glass-enclosed theater rising alongside an open-air terrace within the shell of a former manufacturing building...goal is for the center to open the new \$12 million complex in the fall of 2012. "We want to move very quickly" ... By John King -- Jensen Architects [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban Go for High-Rise Parking Chic: Stylistically, the diminutive building is at war with itself...The whole adds up to less than the sum of some nice parts...As a marketing gimmick, personal high-rise parking has been golden. But the welcome discipline Annabelle Selldorf brought to the apartment designs is what has made 200 Eleventh Avenue a success. By James S. Russell -- Selldorf Architects [images]- Bloomberg News

Reopening a House That's Still Divided: In "The President's House" in Philadelphia, a chance to explore the tensions between America's histories of liberty and of slavery was squandered...we get neither a sense of the place, nor a sense of the issues...A memorial to the practice of slavery is mounted here...The need for some such memorial is keen, but here it seems thumped down as an intrusion. By Edward Rothstein -- Kelly/Maiello [images, video]- New York Times

Theatrical battle takes centre stage: The future of an historic opera house has divided Moscow...a depressing and unedifying spectacle for those who value both Moscow's rich operatic culture, and its disappearing architectural heritage...But...the plans are architecturally impressive, and the debacle has left Muscovites wondering if Arknadzor might have picked the wrong target. - Independent (UK)

Heritage preservationists start Prague architecture web page: ...New in Old, Irrecoverable Losses, Behind the Curtain and A Living City, point to often problematic relations between Prague's old and modern architecture...also points to a number of cases where pressure for the use of lucrative buildings has resulted in their factual demolition since only the facade has been preserved. -- National Heritage Institute (NPI)- Prague Daily Monitor

A Brave New World: Since the Party of God took power during the Second American Civil War in 2034, Secularites in the thousands have been seeking safe haven in Canada...When last heard from, Europe had entered its New Dark

Age...Dubai is now the largest inhabited ruin on the planet. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

New technique recycles 100% of household plastic: ...only about 125 of plastic sent to depots actually gets recycled...The Warwick system..."In a year, tankers would take away from each plant over £5 million (US\$7.7 million) worth of recycled chemicals and each plant would save £500,000 (US\$777,291) a year in land fill taxes alone. As the expected energy costs for each large plant would only be in the region of £50,000 (US\$77,729) a year..." - Gizmag (Australia)



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